

Message Text

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12/11

ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 NSC-10 AID-20 CU-04 IO-12 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01

RSR-01 /101 W

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R 170235 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4118

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 3680

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R M R N O N L Y, VICE 3780

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: YOUTH PARA STUDY

REF: STATE 070302

BEGIN SUMMARY:

(1) LAOS IS LED BY A GROUP OF MEN IN THEIR 50' S AND 60' S. THE MEN WHO WERE RUNNING LAOS A DECADE AGO CONTINUE TO DO SO TODAY AND THEY SHARE THE SAME SOCIAL ORIGINS AS THOSE WHO HAVE RULED LAOS FOR CENTURIES. PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA, WHO IS 72 YEARS OLD, IS BUILDING A RETIREMENT HOUSE IN LUANG PRABANG; BUT HIS ACTUAL WITHDRAWAL AND THAT OF HIS GENERATION OF POWER- HOLDERS WILL BE SLOW IN COMING. WITH THE FORMATION OF A COALITION GOVERNMENT, CALLED FOR IN THE VIENTIANE AGREEMENT, THE LAO POLITICAL SYSTEM MUST NECESSARILY CHANGE- AS WILL THE ANSWERS SUBMITTED BY THIS MISSION. WHETHER THESE CHANGES WILL INTRODUCE YOUNG PEOPLE TO POWER IS CONJECTURAL.

(2) THIS MISSION GENERALLY DEALS WITH POTENTIAL LEADERS REGARDLESS OF THEIR AGE. WE HAVE BEEN ENGAGED FOR SOME TIME IN AN EFFORT TO IDENTIFY YOUNGER POTENTIAL LEADERS IN ALL CATEGORIES FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION BY ALL ELEMENTS OF THIS MISSION. ON THEIR OWN INITIATIVE, A GROUP OF LAO EDUCATED IN THE U. S. HAVE RECENTLY
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ORGANIZED AN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION, WHICH WE ARE QUIETLY HELPING WITH SOME MATERIEL AT THEIR REQUEST. BUT, BY AND LARGE, LAOS REMAINS AT THIS POINT A KINGDOM IN WHICH YOUNGER LEADERS WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE DIFFICULTY MAKING THEIR VIEWS FELT. THEREFORE,

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS POSED BY DEPARTMENT IN REFTEL HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXISTING SITUATION IN LAOS. END SUMMARY.

1. YOUTH CATEGORIES:

A. PERCENTAGE WEIGHTS

	PERCENTAGE
YOUNG BUREAUCRATS	30
YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS	20
YOUNG MILITARY OFFICERS	30
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS - BUSINESS	8
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS - EDUCATION	6
LEADERS OF NATIONAL YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS	3
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS - MEDIA	3

B. RATIONALE

(1) IN DAY- TO- DAY AFFAIRS, THE GROUPS OF LAO POTENTIAL LEADERS WHICH COULD MORE IMMEDIATELY AFFECT GOVERNMENT POLICY ARE MILITARY OFFICERS, BUREAUCRATS AND POLITICIANS, IN THAT ORDER. IN THE LONGER RUN, LEADERS OF LAOS WILL INCREASINGLY TEND TO BE DRAWN FROM NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS RATHER THAN REGIONAL OR FAMILY CLIQUES, AS HAS BEEN THE CASE IN THE PAST. THE ARMY AND THE CIVIL SERVICE ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF SUCH NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, ALTHOUGH THEY REMAIN AFFLICTED WITH PAROCHIALISM AT THIS TIME.

(2) THE YOUNG, NON- GOVERNMENTAL PROFESSIONALS ARE FEW IN NUMBER AND THEIR INFLUENCE IS MINIMAL. BUDDHIST LEADERS ARE VIRTUALLY APOLITICAL IN LAOS. A SMALL NUMBER OF FAMILY- BASED BUSINESSES CONTROLS THE ECONOMY OF LAOS, AND THE WEIGHT GIVEN BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS IS COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR POTENTIAL INFLUENCE ON POLICY. LIKEWISE, YOUNG FACULTY MEMBERS AT THE SECONDARY AND PROFESSIONAL LEVELS MERIT ATTENTION IN VIEW OF THE IMPACT THEY WILL HAVE ON THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS IN LAOS AND BECAUSE THEY CONSTITUTE ONE ELEMENT OF A MINISCULE EDUCATED ELITE WHICH WILL SURELY CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF LAOS. THERE ARE CONFIDENTIAL

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PERHAPS LESS THAN A HALF DOZEN MEDIA PROFESSIONALS WHO EXERT ONLY LIMITED INFLUENCE THROUGH THE LOW CIRCULATION LAO NEWSPAPERS AND JOURNALS AND THROUGH THE TWO GOVERNMENT- OPERATED RADIO STATIONS.

C. SHORT- TERM YOUTH IMPACT

YOUTH PER SE DOES NOT USUALLY PLAY AN INFLUENTIAL ROLE IN LAOS. A GENERATION GAP EXISTS, WITH THE ROLES OF GREATEST INFLUENCE RESERVED FOR THE OLDER LEADERS, AND, WITH A NORMAL EVOLUTION OF EVENTS, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT " YOUTH," AS GROUPED ABOVE, WILL HAVE A " SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON U. S. INTERESTS IN THE NEXT TWO TO FOUR YEARS." TWO CONCEIVABLE DEVELOPMENTS MIGHT CHANGE THIS PICTURE:

(A) YOUNG MILITARY OFFICERS MIGHT, AS CAPTAIN KONG LE DID IN
1960, ATTAIN POWER BY BREAKING WITH THE SYSTEM; A
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ACTION SS-15

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DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01

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CORRECTED COPY FOR MRN ONLY, VICE 3780

B. RATIONALE

(1) GIVEN THE MODEST INFLUENCE OF YOUTH IN LAOS TODAY, REALIS-
TICALLY, OUR FOCUS MUST BE ON ASSURING OUR FUTURE ACCESS TO THESE
PEOPLE. MOREOVER, WHILE YOUNG MILITARY OFFICERS, BUREAUCRATS AND
POLITICIANS MAY HAVE LITTLE LEVERAGE IN THE SYSTEM NOW, THEY ARE
ALERT AND TRAINED TO DEAL WITH NATIONAL ISSUES, AND THEIR
ASPIRATIONS AND DISCONTENTS PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO THE STRESSES
EXISTING WITHIN THE LAO POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL SYSTEM.
SUCH INSIGHTS CAN SERVE AS AN "EARLY WARNING SYSTEM" FOR THE
FUTURE AND A GUIDE FOR THE USG ON HOW DEVELOPMENT IN LAOS CAN
PROCEED ALONG LINES SUITED TO THE LAO. DURING THE PAST DECADE,
THE USG HAS BEEN DEEPLY ENGAGED IN SUPPORT OF THE NEUTRALITY AND
INDEPENDENCE OF LAOS; IT IS HIGHLY IMPORTANT TO THE SUCCESS OF
OUR POLICY IN LAOS (WHICH IS RELATED MORE BROADLY TO OUR POLICY
IN ALL OF INDOCHINA) THAT THE LAO COMPREHEND OUR OBJECTIVES AND
THE NATURE OF THE SUPPORT THE USG GIVES TO ACHIEVE THESE
OBJECTIVES.

(2) OUR GOALS OF FOSTERING A CLIMATE CONDUCTIVE TO ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND OF ENCOURAGING PRAGMATIC APPROACHES TO
NATIONAL PROBLEMS ARE INTERRELATED AND CLEARLY OF FUNDAMENTAL
IMPORTANCE IN THIS COUNTRY WHERE THE USG IS INVESTING SUBSTANTIAL
RESOURCES TO STABILIZE AND DEVELOP THE ECONOMY. WE BELIEVE THAT
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SUCCESS IN THE FOREGOING EFFORTS WILL PROVIDE THE BEST MEANS OF
STRENGTHENING MODERATE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE THEMSELVES
STRIVING FOR THESE PROGRESSIVE AND NATIONALISTIC ENDS.

3. A. RESOURCES

	PERCENTAGE
-- AID PROGRAMS	45
-- MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS/ ORIENTATION TOURS IN U. S. OR THIRD COUNTRIES FOR LAO MILITARY OFFICERS	40
-- USIA CULTURAL AND INFORMATIONAL PROGRAMMING (OTHER THAN EXCHANGES)	8
-- ALL INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GRANTS	2
-- FOREIGN STUDENTS	2
-- AMERICAN TEACHERS	2
-- AMERICAN PROFESSORS (LECTURING)	1

FUNDS DEVOTED TO MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAMS RUN APPROXIMATELY \$2 MILLION WHILE USAID/ USIS PROGRAMS FOCUSING ON YOUTH TOTAL APPROXIMATELY \$3.5 MILLION. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT ONCE STABLE PEACE IS RESTORED TO LAOS, THE RESOURCES DEVOTED TO USAID/ USIS EFFORT WILL ASSUME A LARGER RELATIVE PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL, AND A BALANCE MORE SUPPORTIVE OF OUR STATED OBJECTIVES WILL THUS BE ACHIEVED.

B. IMPROVEMENTS

(1) RE DOD TRAINING, WITH THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES, COMBAT SKILLS WILL BE NEEDED LESS; THUS, YOUTH OBJECTIVES COULD BE BETTER ATTAINED WITH INCREASED EMPHASIS ON MANAGERIAL SKILLS AS OPPOSED TO COMBAT TRAINING. (MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE AVAILABILITY OF FUNDING FROM WASHINGTON.)

(2) ON USIA SIDE, MISSION EFFORTS TO REACH NEW AND YOUTHFUL LEADERSHIP WOULD BE GREATLY ENHANCED BY INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF CU INTERNATIONAL GRANTS. GREATER EFFORTS ARE REQUIRED TO ASSURE MAXIMUM BENEFITS FROM GRANTS, BOTH IN SELECTION OF CANDIDATES AND IN PROGRAMMING IN U. S., TO ASSURE THAT VISITORS' SCHEDULES ARE TAILORED TO INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS AND THAT HOSTS ARE BRIEFED ON THEIR VISITORS AND ON LAOS. TOO FREQUENTLY, VISITORS HAVE COMPLAINED THAT PERSONS RECEIVING THEM WERE CONFIDENTIAL

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UNFAMILIAR WITH THEIR COUNTRY AND THE INTENT OF THEIR VISIT. IN GENERAL, INCREASED FOLLOW- UP ACTIVITIES WITH RETURNED USG-SPONSORED TRAINEES-- ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED ACADEMIC TRAINING IN U. S. -- ARE NOW BEING CONDUCTED BY ALL AGENCIES WITHIN THE U. S. MISSION IN LAOS.

C. PRIVATE RESOURCES

(1) THE ASIA FOUNDATION IN LAOS, WHICH IS ABOUT 80 PERCENT SUBSIDIZED BY AID, THROUGH ITS ASSISTANCE TO LAO CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, COMPLEMENTS OTHER USG PROGRAMS. IT HAS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED ITS ABILITY TO MAKE AN IMPACT UPON YOUNG LAO

LEADERSHIP. UNDER A NEW LAO COALITION GOVERNMENT, OFFICIAL USG PROGRAMS WILL COME UNDER SEVERE SCRUTINY, ENTAILING CAUTION AND UNDUE DELAYS. AMERICAN FOUNDATION EFFORTS, GIVEN THESE CONDITIONS, MAY BE IN A POSITION TO ACT AS AN EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL ADJUNCT TO USG EFFORTS IN REACHING AND HELPING TO DEVELOP NEW LAO LEADERSHIP. WHILE THE EXISTING AMERICAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY IS SMALL, IT HAS, NEVERT ELESS, MADE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON LAO YOUTH-BY EMPLOYING NUMBERS OF LAO YOUNG PEOPLE, MANY OF WHOM WERE EDUCATED IN THE U. S.

(2) INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICES - (THERE IS NO PEACE CORPS PROGRAM IN LAOS.) AS USAID CONTRACT PERSONNEL, IVS VOLUNTEERS HAVE DEVOTED THEIR PRIMARY EFFORTS TO USAID EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS. THEIR PRESENCE IN LAOS, PARTICULARLY AS TEACHERS AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL, HAS HAD A BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON YOUTH RELATIONS.

4. RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH:

A. IN TERMS OF OVERALL U. S. INTEREST IN LAOS AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE MISSION NOTES THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF YOUTH AS " LOW."

B. THE LAO THEMSELVES DO NOT RESPECT YOUTH, AS A GROUP; THEREFORE, WE MUST DEAL WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN TERMS OF THEIR BEING FUTURE " OLD" PEOPLE/ LEADERS.

C. AT THE SAME TIME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO IDENTIFY YOUNGER POTENTIAL LEADERS IN ALL CATEGORIES FOR SPECIAL ATTENTION BY ALL ELEMENTS OF THIS MISSION. FOR EXAMPLE, AT THEIR REQUEST, WE HAVE
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BEEN PROVIDING SMALL AMOUNTS OF MATERIEL AND ADVICE TO A GROUP OF AMERICAN EDUCATED LAO WHO RECENTLY ORGANIZED AN ALUMNI ASSOCIATION IN VIENTIANE.

(1) PERSONNEL TIME

(A) PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PERSONNEL TIME THAT SHOULD BE USED FOR YOUTH WORK IS LESS THAN 5 PERCENT.

(B) TIME BY FUNCTION:

CONTACT WORK	20 PERCENT
REPORTING	5 PERCENT
PROGRAM WORK	75 PERCENT

(C) AGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES:

STATE/ USIS	20 PERCENT
AID	40 PERCENT
DOD	40 PERCENT

(2) PROGRAM RESOURCES

60 PERCENT OF CU BUDGET
40 PERCENT OF USIA BUDGET

10 PERCENT OF USAID PROJECT BUDGET

1 PERCENT OF MSF BUDGET.

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